

# Fostering (supra-)regional cooperation through LEADER/CLLD

Lynn-Livia Fynn & Kim Pollermann

Thünen Institute of Rural Studies, Brunswick, Germany

## 61st ERSAs Congress

Theme:

G08 – Cooperation and Local / Regional  
Development

Chair: Eiji Ohno

Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2022

11:15 – 12:45

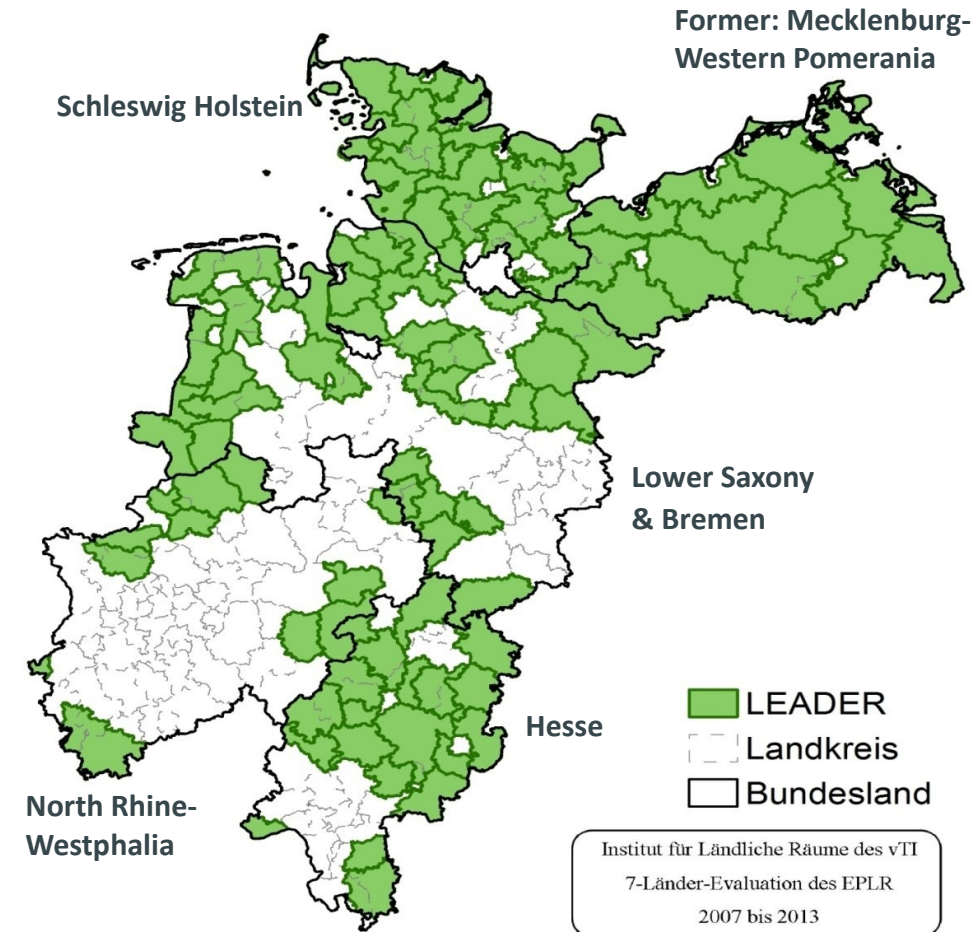
Hybrid conference/Pécs, Hungary

22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> August 2022

# 5-„Länder“ Evaluation: Project Background

„Länder“ = „Bundesländer“ =  
federal states in Germany

- Evaluation of **Rural Development Programmes** that implement **EAFRD** funding
- Analysing the **effects of financing rural development** on agriculture, the environment and **well-being/quality of life** in rural areas
- Aim: **policy recommendations** for the design and implementation of different funding measures
- Ongoing research: 2007 – 2016, 2016 – 2026
- **Mixed methods** approach:
  - Interviews with project initiators and government employees
  - (Online) Surveys with various stakeholders
  - Quantitative analyses of data from the funding databases



Source: Thünen-Institute of Rural Studies, 2012

# Outline

1. Introduction to LEADER/CLLD
2. Research aim and approach
3. LEADER cooperation
4. Results
5. Conclusion and recommendations



Source: Manfred Bathke

# Introduction to LEADER/CLLD

Bottom-up approach to local development through local strategies, local partnerships and funding of locally initiated projects

## LEADER

- Initiated in 1991, focus on rural areas
- Forms integral part of the EU's rural development policy since 2007
- Single EU fund
- Is still applied in most EU states and federal states in Germany

## CLLD

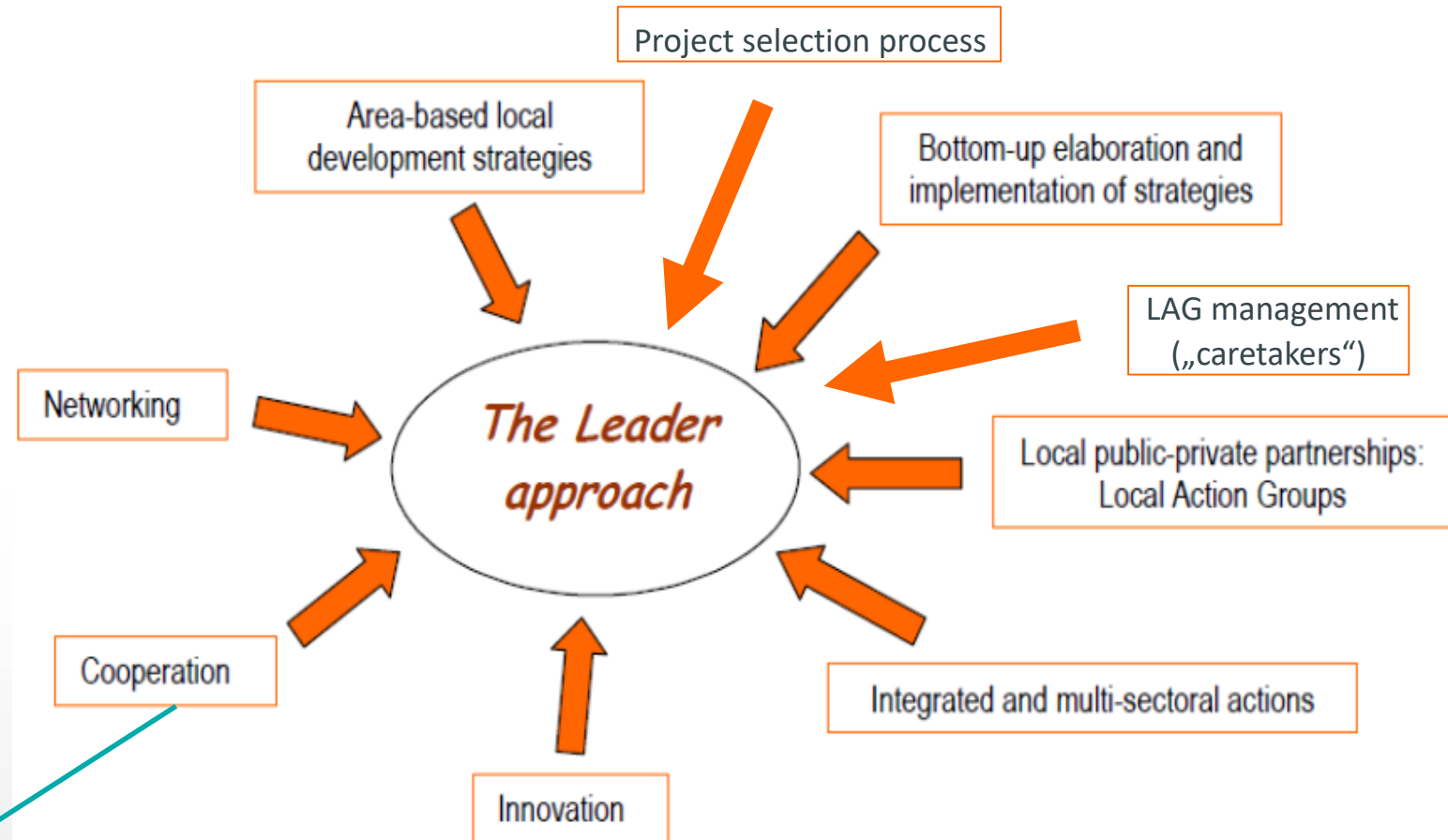
- CLLD = LEADER relabeled, rural and urban areas
- Introduced in the 2014-2020 funding period
- More funding options (4 different European Structural and Investment Funds)
- Option: multi-fonds approach

LEADER = Links between actions for the development of the rural economy

CLLD = Community-led local development

# The LEADER approach

- Various areas of interaction and cooperation
- Focus today:
  - **Cooperation through LEADER projects**



Source: European Commission, 2006 (modified)

# Research aim and approach

- **Aim:** To evaluate the benefits from / obstacles for LEADER-funded cooperation projects
- **Study areas (number of LEADER regions):** Hesse (24), Lower Saxony (41), North Rhine-Westphalia (28) and Schleswig-Holstein (22)
- **Data sources:**
  - LAG management survey: one manager per LAG was surveyed in 2018 (N=115, n=114, response rate 99 percent)
  - Survey of beneficiaries of LEADER cooperation projects (RDP submeasure 19.3) in 2020/2021 (N=148, n=132, response rate: 89 percent)
  - Funding databases from each federal state

# LEADER cooperation (submeasure 19.3)

- Financial support for cooperation projects between rural communities from two or more different LEADER regions through joint projects
- Also funding for preparatory technical support for such projects
- Types of cooperation:

1. Inter-territorial cooperation: project two or more LAGs or comparable groups within a Member State

2. Transnational cooperation: two or more LAGs or comparable groups from different Member States

1a. LAGs/other groups from the same federal state

1b. LAGs/ other groups from different federal states

# Experience with LEADER cooperation projects

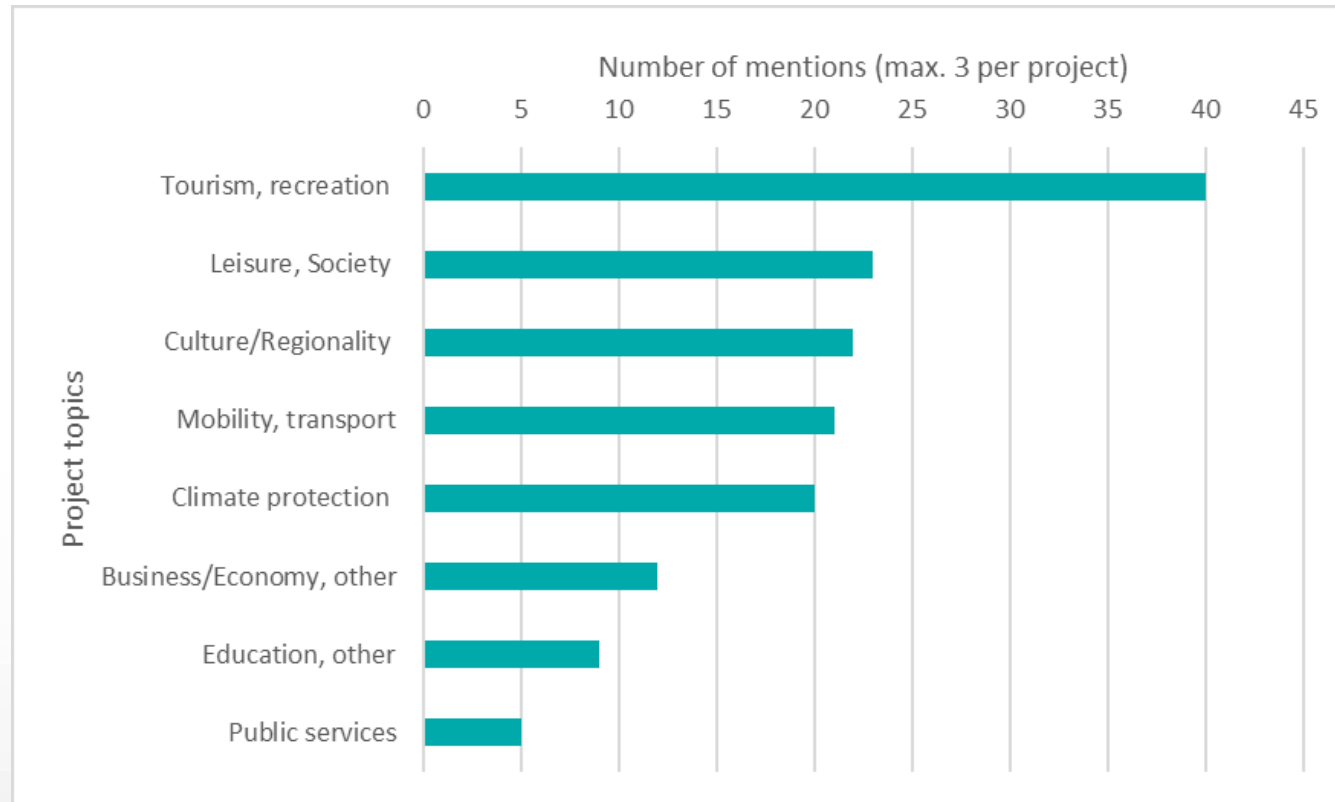
... shown as the percentage of LEADER regions (with experiences with such projects) in each federal state based on the location of the partner region

Location of cooperation partner	Hesse	Lower Saxony	North Rhine-Westphalia	Schleswig-Holstein
Same federal state	87 %	83 %	68 %	100 %
Other federal state	48 %	20 %	36 %	9 %
Other country	9 %	10 %	21 %	0 %

- Sum of cooperation projects (2014-2020): 166
- Total funding (2014-2020): 9.2 million euros
- Ratio of cooperation projects to „non-cooperation“ projects: 1:19



# Examples of cooperation projects



- Infrastructural projects: biking/hiking trails, e-mobility, parks
- Concepts (nature parks, cross-border mobility, marketing)
- Regional conference on climate protection, strategy process for securing (skilled) labour

# Challenges faced in the implementation of cooperation projects

According to beneficiaries:

Larger time investment  
required for planning  
and implementation:  
45 %

Different project  
selection criteria in  
participating regions:  
26 %

Assigning duties and  
responsibilities:  
17 %

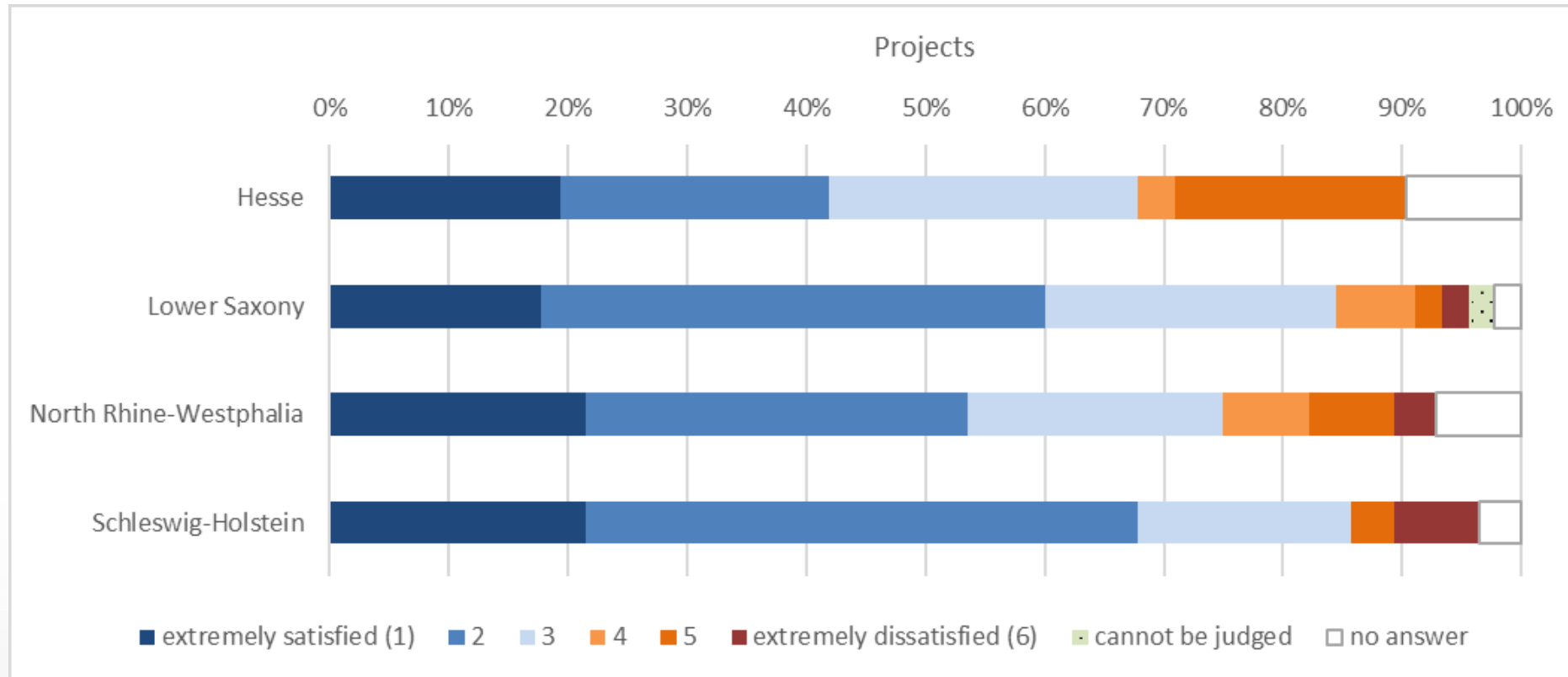
Difficulty finding  
public funds to  
cofinance projects:  
8 %

Main challenge according to LAG  
managers:

Different funding regulations in  
participating federal states/countries.  
This includes:

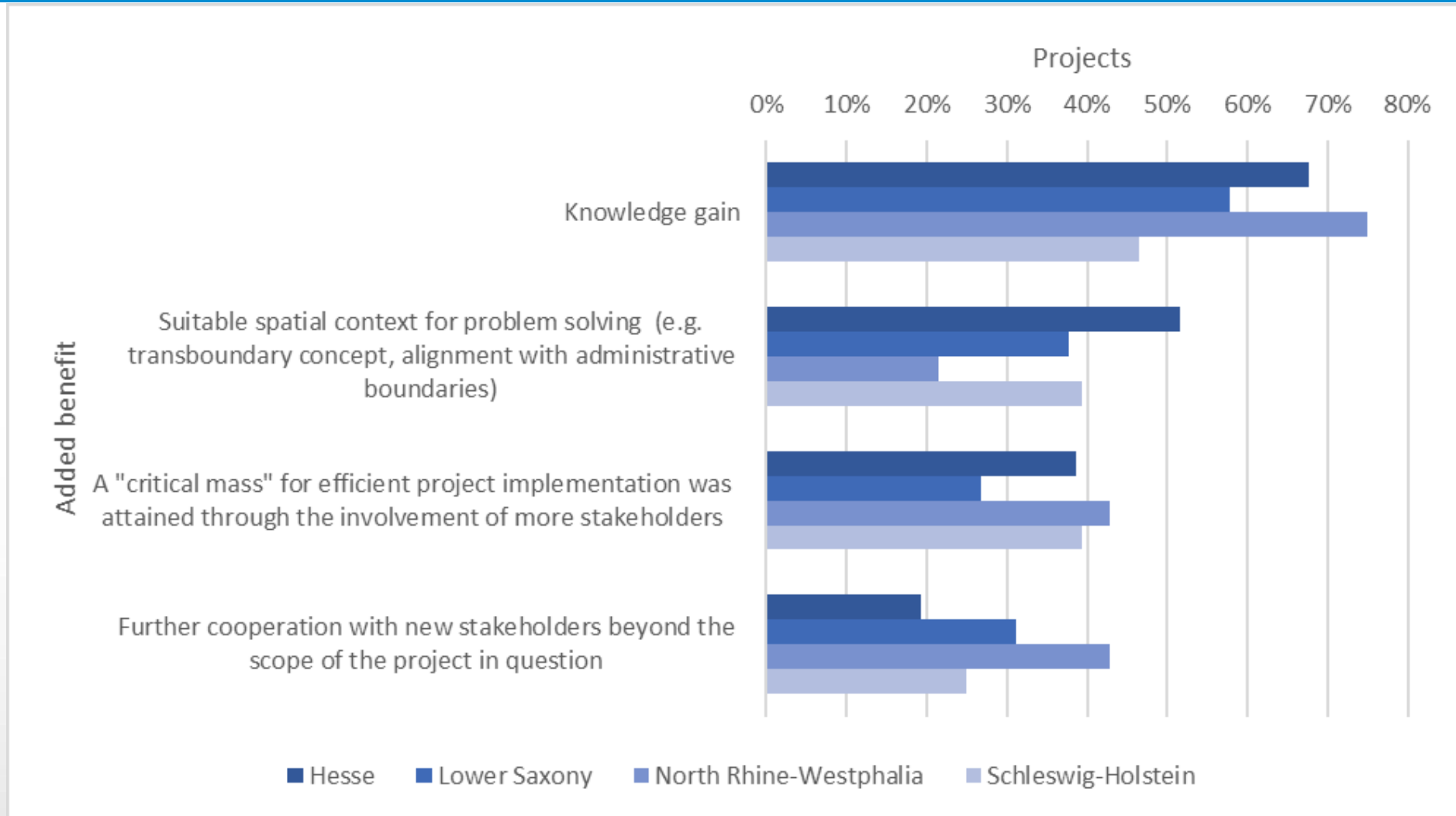
- Funding guidelines
- Application requirements
- Internal administrative procedures
- Accounting procedures (payment and clearing/invoicing modalities)
- Funding rates
- etc.

# Satisfaction with funding procedure



- Majority of beneficiaries is satisfied with the funding procedure
- Critical views (16 % of beneficiaries rather dissatisfied) point to a need for administrative simplification

# Added benefits of cooperation projects



# Conclusion and recommendations

- Cooperation projects are a good way
  - to address common problems faced by different rural areas
  - to develop and test new solutions to problems faced
- Administrative hurdles are the main hinderance to the efficient implementation of cooperation projects
- What is required:
  - The need for simplification (e.g. adjustment of funding regulations and budgetary guidelines)
  - Also beneficial: increasing staff capacity of regionalmanagements which assist beneficiaries with the funding procedure

*Thank you for your attention!*

**Contact:**

[lynn.fynn@thuenen.de](mailto:lynn.fynn@thuenen.de)

[kim.pollermann@thuenen.de](mailto:kim.pollermann@thuenen.de)

Thünen Institute of Rural Studies

**Further information:**

[www.eler-evaluierung.de](http://www.eler-evaluierung.de)

[www.thuenen.de](http://www.thuenen.de)

